(b) if so, whether it has been tested and found suitable;

(c) the estimated cost of the indigenously developed valve; and

(d) the steps taken for the large scale manufacturing of the valve in order to extend its benefit to the heart patients?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) to (d) Shree Chitra Tirunal Institute of Medical Sciences and Technology Thiruvananthapuram in collaboration with the National Research Development Corporation has developed an indigenous Heart Valve, named Chitra Valve. It has been tested and found suitable. The approximate cost of the indigenously developed valve for the heart is Rs. 14,000 to Rs. 19,000 and is being marketed as Chitra Valve by TTK Company.

Functioning of Government Hospitals

†56. SHRI ABHAY KANT PRASAD: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the reports in print media about the frequent incidents of failure of sterilization cases among women; and

(b) if so, the steps proposed to be taken by Government to check recurrence of such incidents in future and to improve functioning of all the Government hospitals in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Such incidents have occasionally come to notice.

The steps taken by the Government to check the recurrence of such incidents in future and to improve the functioning of all Govt. Hospitals in the country are:—

i. Laparoscopes (equipment required for female sterilization) are supplied to Government hospitals all over the country through the respective state governments.

ii. Training Facilities for female/male sterilization are provided for medical officers at 165 training institutes in the country.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

iii. Standards for male and female sterilization have been published by the Govt. of India and circulated to government hospitals in the country.

iv. Instructions have been issued to all state governments to ensure that the doctors who perfom sterilization are adequately trained and proper procedures followed.

v. Quarterly reports of failure of sterilization cases are collected by the Govt. of India from the respective states.

HIV/AIDS in NER

57. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that a number of HIV/AIDS cases are reported in the North Eastern Region;

(b) if so, the details of the affected people in Assam, during the last three years; and

(c) what action is being taken by Government to control further spread of this disease in the NER, particularly in Assam?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. As per the reports received from States, the number of reported AIDS cases in the State of Assam are as follows:

Year 2000: 50
Year 2001: 51
Year 2002: 29

(c) In order to prevent and control the spread of HIV/AIDS in the North Eastern Region, Govt. of India has launched a comprehensive programme as a centrally sponsored scheme with the following components:—

(i) Reducing the spread of HIV in groups at high risk by identification of target populations and providing peer counselling, condom promotion and treatment of sexually transmitted infections.